



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2023

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/23/3323247

91 Park Road, Hale, Trafford WA15 9LE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs A Davies against the decision of Trafford Council.
 - The application Ref 109279/HHA/22, dated 29 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing garage, a single storey rear extension and raised decking area to allow proposed ground floor and basement level rear extensions and alterations, including a new raised terrace area and a replacement detached garage/store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the demolition of the existing garage, a single storey rear extension and raised decking area to allow proposed ground floor and basement level rear extensions and alterations, including a new raised terrace area and a replacement detached garage/store at 91 Park Road, Hale, Trafford WA15 9LE, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 109279/HHA/22, dated 29 September 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 22/1429-00-SLP/SBP, 22/1429-01 A, 22/1429-02 A, 22/1429-03 A, 22/1429-04 A, 22/1429-05 A, 22/1429-06 A and 22/1429-07 A.
 - 3) No above ground construction works shall take place until samples of all materials to be used externally on the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the South Hale Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The site falls within the South Hale Conservation Area ('SHCA'). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that,

in respect of development affecting conservation areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance.

4. The National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework') sets out at paragraphs 199 and 200 that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, such as conservation areas, and that harm to their significance requires clear and convincing justification. It continues at paragraph 203 that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should also be taken into account.
5. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document: A Guide for Designing House Extensions and Alterations 2012 ('SPD4') also requires that proposals affecting heritage assets and conservation areas must be carefully designed to enhance and complement their distinctive qualities.
6. The special character and significance of the SHCA is described in the South Hale Conservation Area Appraisal 2017 and the South Hale Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document Management Plan 2017 ('SPD5.21a'). As confirmed on my visit, it includes finely detailed, substantial properties in a variety of architectural styles, with many from the Victorian and Edwardian eras. These are typically set well back from the tree-lined streets on secluded, spacious, well-landscaped plots.
7. In those regards, the semi-detached Edwardian Arts and Crafts style house at 91 Park Road, with its high-quality detailing and materials, architectural embellishments, and verdant setting, is typical of the area. The building makes a positive contribution to the SHCA, and I agree with the principal parties that it is a non-designated heritage asset.
8. The Council raises no objection to the proposed ground floor level rear extension or the garage/store. Given that the ground floor rear extension would replace a slightly smaller extension and would be proportionate to the main house with matching timber, render and brick detailing; and that the garage/store would also replace a non-original structure, I have no reason to disagree with that assessment.
9. Turning to the rest of the scheme, SPD5.21a sets out, amongst other things, that any development concerning the basement of a property should be sensitively designed so that it does not detract from the established architecture of the building, and so that the balance of its exterior is not significantly altered (with the addition of light wells or large, semi-sunken basement extensions, for example).
10. I observed that the rear of No 91 is significantly less decorative than its front and side elevations which face the public realm, and that it has had various modern alterations. It also has an existing rear basement, which can be accessed via external steps to the side, and an area of raised decking, which elevates the ground floor of the property above the adjacent garden.
11. As a result of this scheme, the basement would be enlarged, but having regard to cumulative impacts, it would still be clearly subordinate in scale and proportionate to the host. The mass and visual impact of the basement extension would be relatively modest, and its walls would be faced with matching brickwork, which would help to assimilate it with the host property.

12. The sliding doors and glazing on its rear and side faces would be divided vertically in a similar fashion to those proposed on the ground floor rear extension – to which the Council does not object. They would thus respect the vertical emphasis of the fenestration in the floors above, whilst providing a contemporary, light weight appearance, to ensure a legible contrast between the original building and the extensions; and they would provide a clear link and relationship between the house and the garden.
13. The proposed window in the north-east elevation would have a horizontal emphasis, but it would be a very small, discretely located feature, which would not generally be seen together with the rest of the building.
14. Although there would be tall retaining walls, with a right-angled corner, around the new rear/side terrace, in the context of this very substantial property and its large garden, and the existing, albeit lower, chamfered walls they would replace, they would not be imposing. The balustrades' frameless glass construction would help minimise the mass and visual impact of those features.
15. As evidenced at paragraphs 3.28 to 3.29 and Appendix 9 of the appellants' statement, there have been previous alterations to the topography within the host's garden. Whilst, as a result of this scheme, there would be a slightly more abrupt change in levels to the rear of the building, having regard to the side elevation drawing at Appendix 13, the changes proposed are nevertheless fairly modest. Given the discrete location and substantial size of the host's landscaped rear garden, and previous alterations, the proposed ground level changes would not harm the area's character or the setting of the building.
16. Summing up, the scheme would, to a limited degree, change the appearance of the rear face of the house, but it would not detract from its key features of architectural and historic interest, nor significantly alter the balance of its exterior, or adversely affect the contribution it makes to the SHCA.
17. The proposal would not therefore conflict with Policy 46 of SPD5.21a, nor with the advice in SPD4. Having regard to paragraphs 200 and 203 of the Framework, it would not harm the character or appearance of the SHCA, nor the significance of the host as a non-designated heritage asset. As I have found that no harm would be caused to the SHCA, it is not necessary for me to balance any harm against public benefits arising from the proposal.
18. For similar reasons, the scheme would not conflict with the more general design requirements in Policy L7 of the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy 2012 that development shall be appropriate to its context, and shall enhance the streetscene or the character of an area, by appropriately addressing matters such as scale, height, massing, layout, elevation treatment and materials.

Conditions and Conclusion

19. Turning to the matter of conditions, as well as the standard time limit, I agree with the Council that, in the interests of certainty, a condition is necessary requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Finally, given the significance of the host property and the contribution it makes to the character and appearance of the area, in the interests of good design, a condition is necessary requiring the submission and approval of external facing materials.

20. The scheme would not harm the character and appearance of the South Hale Conservation Area or the host property. Consequently, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR